

Mr. President, I urge you to have compassion for the Americans who can't afford this price of oil.

THE ENERGY SITUATION REQUIRES A THREE-LEGGED STOOL

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to hear the Democrats flail around for reasons that they won't put energy issues on the floor. I agree with the preceding speaker. Let's talk about the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Let's talk about offshore drilling. We haven't moved a single appropriation bill because of the fear that we may have an amendment on offshore drilling.

Now the President has lifted his ban, and what we hear from the Democrats is it will take 10 years, it will take 20 years. It means two things: number one, they agree there's oil out there; number two, there's a discussion about how long it will take.

But my question to them is where are your electric cars? Where are your hybrids that suddenly are going to save us? Those are also going to be 10 years down the road.

We need to put it all on the table. We need to look at conservation, we need to look at alternative energy, and we need to drill. It is that simple. You have got to have a three-legged stool to answer the energy situation. And I don't know why the Speaker of the House is afraid to put it on the floor. That is right. There will not be a debate on it because the Democrats are afraid to put it on the floor.

I say let's have an up-or-down vote on all of these issues.

A GOVERNMENT OF, BY, AND FOR THE OIL COMPANIES

(Mr. MORAN of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, you know, when you listen to the Bush White House and our Republican friends, you really do get the impression that this is a government of, by, and for the oil companies. And in fact, maybe it is. I mean, after all, President Bush was the founder of Bush Oil Exploration. He was a paid board member of several oil exploration companies. Vice President CHENEY is the former CEO of Halliburton, the world's largest oil services company. He's made millions off Halliburton stock while he's been in office.

Newsweek, in fact, at the beginning of the Bush administration, identified 11 key decision makers in the energy policy area that had worked for or lobbied for the energy industry. And in fact when Vice President CHENEY put together his energy transition team, 50 members were from the big corporate energy companies. None was from renewable energy organizations. Maybe that's why the Bush administration

has cut renewable energy programs by 27 percent, including a 54 percent cut in solar energy.

There are many reasons why we're in this situation, Mr. Speaker, and one big reason is the background and the priorities of the President and Vice President.

HOUSING MARKET MELTDOWN

(Mr. MCNERNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I represent the city of Stockton, California, which suffers from the highest foreclosure rates in the country. I have seen exactly how devastating this problem is for communities, and more important, for the families in our district. I hear all too often the heartbreaking stories of people struggling to keep up. In fact, Mr. CARDOZA, who spoke a minute ago, and I have had foreclosure workshops to provide counseling to help families refinance and stay out of foreclosure.

Our current economic crisis, including the housing market meltdown, can financially devastate many people, and we need change right now so that hardworking American families can stay in their homes. We need to reform the system by raising the conforming loan limits and providing critical relief to hardworking families.

I strongly believe that we can help provide the breathing room that families need so they not only weather the downturn, but come back stronger than ever.

BIG OIL DOESN'T NEED MORE LAND TO DRILL

(Mr. YARMUTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, while gas prices continue to soar, Democrats are looking for real solutions to give Americans relief at the pump. We aren't repeating the same rhetoric day after day about opening up our pristine lands and waters to drilling only to save pennies per gallon in 20 years. Instead, we've offered energy solutions for today and for the future.

We pressured the President to stop sending more oil to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, which could save about 25 cents per gallon at the pump. We also passed legislation cracking down on price gouging. And now we're calling on President Bush to begin releasing oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

After 7 years of the Bush-Cheney energy policy, written by and for an oil industry raking in record profits, a plan to transition America to a new and more affordable energy future is long overdue. The American people are suffering now and are looking for solutions today. Republicans say we need to open more land for drilling, but the

average American family will spend \$57,800 on gas before that drilling saves them a penny.

Mr. Speaker, House Republicans need to stop looking to the past for solutions to today's problems.

MIDDLE CLASS CONTINUES TO GET SQUEEZED AS ECONOMIC SITUATION GETS WORSE

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, for 7 years now, President Bush and Republicans have catered to the excesses of the wealthiest few while ignoring real needs of working Americans. Over the past 6 years, the median household income has fallen over \$1,000 per year while prices for health care, education, food, and gas have increased well above inflation. How can we expect working men and women to continue to meet the financial needs of their families when they bring home smaller paychecks as prices rise?

The Democratic Congress has been working hard to ensure that working Americans are not ignored. We passed an economic stimulus package that puts money into the wallets of working families. We've also passed legislation addressing the concerns of millions of Americans, including many of those from my home State of New Jersey, who are afraid of losing their jobs or are afraid they might lose their homes.

Senator MCCAIN's chief economic adviser claims that Americans are whining, that the economic downturn is all in their heads. House Democrats realize that we need to turn the Bush economy around.

□ 1030

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

NASA 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE COIN ACT

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6455) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6455

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “NASA 50th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds that—

(1) the National Aeronautics and Space Administration began operation on October 1, 1958, with about 8,000 employees and an annual budget of \$100,000,000;

(2) over the next 50 years, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration has been involved in many defining events which have shaped the course of human history and demonstrated to the world the character of the people of the United States;

(3) among the many firsts by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration are that—

(A) on December 6, 1958, the United States launched Pioneer 3, the first United States satellite to ascend to an altitude of 63,580 miles;

(B) on March 3, 1959, the United States sent Pioneer 4 to the Moon, successfully making the first United States lunar flyby;

(C) on April 1, 1960, the United States launched TIROS 1, the first successful meteorological satellite, observing Earth's weather;

(D) on May 5, 1961, Freedom 7, carrying Astronaut Alan B. Shepard, Jr., was the first American space flight involving human beings;

(E) on February 20, 1962, John Glenn became the first American to circle the Earth, making 3 orbits in his Friendship 7 Mercury spacecraft;

(F) on December 14, 1962, Mariner 2 became the first spacecraft to commit a successful planetary flyby (Venus);

(G) on April 6, 1965, the United States launched Intelsat I (also known as Early Bird 1), the first commercial satellite (communications), into geostationary orbit;

(H) on June 3 through 7, 1965, the second piloted Gemini mission, Gemini IV, stayed aloft for 4 days, and astronaut Edward H. White II performed the first EVA or “spacewalk” by an American;

(I) on June 2, 1966, Surveyor 1 became the first American spacecraft to soft-land on the Moon;

(J) on May 31, 1971, the United States launched Mariner 9, the first mission to orbit another planet (Mars) beginning November 13, 1971;

(K) on April 12, 1981, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration launched the Space Shuttle Columbia on the first flight of the Space Transportation System (STS-1);

(L) on June 18, 1983, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration launched Space Shuttle Challenger (STS-7) carrying 3 mission specialists, including Sally K. Ride, the first woman astronaut;

(M) in another historic mission, 2 months later, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration launched STS-8 carrying the first black American astronaut, Guion S. Bluford; and

(N) on July 23, 1999, the Space Shuttle Columbia's 26th flight was led by Air Force Col. Eileen Collins, the first woman to command a Shuttle mission;

(4) on April 9, 1959, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration unveiled the Mercury astronaut corps, 7 men with “the right stuff”: John H. Glenn, Jr., Walter M. Schirra, Jr., Alan B. Shepard, Jr., M. Scott Carpenter, L. Gordon Cooper, Virgil I. “Gus” Grissom, and Donald K. “Deke” Slayton;

(5) on May 25, 1961, President John F. Kennedy, reflecting the highest aspirations of the American people, proclaimed: “I believe this Nation should commit itself to achiev-

ing the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to Earth. No single space project in this period will be more impressive to mankind, or more important in the long-range exploration of space; and none will be so difficult or expensive to accomplish.”;

(6) on September 19, 1961, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration announced that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration center dedicated to human space flight would be built in Houston, Texas;

(7) on February 17, 1973, the Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston was renamed the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center;

(8) on December 21, 1968, Apollo 8 took off atop a Saturn V booster from the Kennedy Space Center for a historic mission to orbit the Moon;

(9) as Apollo 8 traveled outward, the crew focused a portable television camera on Earth and for the first time humanity saw its home from afar, a tiny, lovely, and fragile “blue marble” hanging in the blackness of space;

(10) this transmission and viewing of Earth from a distance was an enormously significant accomplishment and united the Nation at a time when American society was in crisis over Vietnam, race relations, urban problems, and a host of other difficulties;

(11) on July 20, 1969, Apollo 11 astronauts Neil A. Armstrong and Edwin E. Aldrin made the first lunar landing mission while Michael Collins orbited overhead in the Apollo command module;

(12) Armstrong set foot on the surface of the Moon, telling the millions of listeners that it was “one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind”, and Aldrin soon followed and planted an American flag, but omitted claiming the land for the United States, as had routinely been done during European exploration of the Americas;

(13) the 2 Moon walkers left behind an American flag and a plaque bearing the inscription: “Here Men From The Planet Earth First Set Foot Upon the Moon. Jul. 1969 A.D. We Came in Peace for All Mankind.”;

(14) on April 24, 1990, the Hubble Space Telescope was launched into space aboard the STS-31 mission of the Space Shuttle Discovery, and since then, the Hubble has revolutionized astronomy, while expanding our knowledge of the universe and inspiring millions of scientists, students, and members of the public with its unprecedented deep and clear images of space;

(15) on July 4, 1997, the Mars Pathfinder landed on Mars and on January 29, 1998, an International Space Station agreement among 15 countries met in Washington, DC, to sign agreements to establish the framework for cooperation among the partners on the design, development, operation, and utilization of the Space Station;

(16) the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's stunning achievements over the last 50 years have been won for all mankind at great cost and sacrifice; in the quest to explore the universe, many National Aeronautics and Space Administration employees have lost their lives, including the crews of Apollo 1, the Space Shuttle Challenger, and the Space Shuttle Columbia;

(17) the success of the United States space exploration program in the 20th Century augurs well for its continued leadership in the 21st Century, such leadership being attributable to the remarkable and indispensable partnership between the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and its 10 space and research centers, including—

(A) from small spacecraft to supercomputers, science missions and payloads to thermal protection systems, information technology to aerospace, the Ames Research

Center in California's Silicon Valley, which provides products, technologies, and services that enable NASA missions and expand human knowledge;

(B) the Dryden Flight Research Center, the leading center for innovative flight research;

(C) the Glenn Research Center, which develops power, propulsion, and communication technologies for space flight systems and aeronautics research;

(D) the Goddard Space Flight Center, which specializes in research to expand knowledge on the Earth and its environment, the solar system, and the universe through observations from space;

(E) the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, the leading center for robotic exploration of the Solar System;

(F) the Johnson Space Center, which manages the development, testing, production, and delivery of all United States human spacecraft and all human spacecraft-related functions;

(G) the Kennedy Space Center, the gateway to the Universe and world leader in preparing and launching missions around the Earth and beyond;

(H) the Langley Research Center, which continues to forge new frontiers in aviation and space research for aerospace, atmospheric sciences, and technology commercialization to improve the way the world lives;

(I) the Marshall Space Flight Center, a world leader in developing space transportation and propulsion systems that accelerate exploration and scientific discovery, including the Michoud Assembly Facility, which has been a world-class facility since 1961 for fabrication of large space structures, including the Saturn V and the Space Shuttle External Tank, and which will have a critical role in the Constellation program, including manufacturing major pieces of the Orion crew capsule, the Ares I upper stage, and the Ares V core stage; and

(J) the Stennis Space Center, which is responsible for rocket propulsion testing and for partnering with industry to develop and implement remote sensing technology;

(18) the United States should pay tribute to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and to its successful partnerships with the space and research centers, by minting and issuing a commemorative silver dollar coin; and

(19) the surcharge proceeds from the sale of a commemorative coin would generate valuable funding for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Families Assistance Fund, for the purposes of providing need-based financial assistance to the families of any National Aeronautics and Space Administration personnel who lose their lives as a result of injuries suffered in the performance of their official duties, and for other worthy and important purposes.

SEC. 3. COIN SPECIFICATIONS.

(a) **DENOMINATIONS.**—In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Secretary of the Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the “Secretary”) shall mint and issue the following coins:

(1) **\$50 GOLD COINS.**—Not more than 50,000 \$50 gold coins, which shall—

(A) weigh 33.931 grams;

(B) have a diameter of 32.7 millimeters; and

(C) contain 1 troy ounce of fine gold.

(2) **\$1 SILVER COINS.**—Not more than 300,000 \$1 coins of each of the 9 designs specified in section 4(a)(3)(B), which shall—

(A) weigh 26.73 grams;

(B) have a diameter of 1.500 inches; and

(C) contain 90 percent silver and 10 percent copper.

(b) **LEGAL TENDER.**—The coins minted under this Act shall be legal tender, as provided in section 5103 of title 31, United States Code.

(c) **NUMISMATIC ITEMS.**—For purposes of section 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all coins minted under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

(d) **MINTAGE LEVEL LIMIT.**—Notwithstanding the mintage level limit described under section 5112(m)(2)(A)(ii) of title 31, United States Code, the Secretary may mint and issue not more than 300,000 of each of the 9 \$1 coins authorized to be minted under this Act.

SEC. 4. DESIGN OF COINS.

(a) DESIGN REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The design of the coins minted under this Act shall be emblematic of the 50 years of exemplary and unparalleled achievements of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

(2) **DESIGNATION AND INSCRIPTIONS.**—On each coin minted under this Act, there shall be—

(A) a designation of the value of the coin;

(B) an inscription of the year “2008”; and

(C) inscriptions of the words “Liberty”, “In God We Trust”, “United States of America”, and “E Pluribus Unum”, and such other inscriptions as the Secretary may determine to be appropriate for the designs of the coins.

(3) **COIN IMAGES.**—

(A) **\$50 COINS.**—

(i) **OBVERSE.**—The obverse of the \$50 coins issued under this Act shall bear an image of the sun.

(ii) **REVERSE.**—The reverse of the \$50 coins issued under this Act shall bear a design emblematic of the sacrifice of the United States astronauts who lost their lives in the line of duty over the course of the space program.

(iii) **HIGH RELIEF.**—The design and inscriptions on the obverse and reverse of the \$50 coins issued under this Act shall be in high relief.

(B) **\$1 COINS.**—

(i) **OBVERSE.**—The obverse of the \$1 coins issued under this Act shall bear 9 different designs, each of which shall consist of an image of 1 of the 9 planets of the solar system, including Earth.

(ii) **REVERSE.**—The reverse of the \$1 coins issued under this Act shall bear different designs, each of which shall be emblematic of the contributions of the research and space centers, subject to the following requirements:

(I) **EARTH COIN.**—The reverse of the \$1 coins issued under this Act which bear an image of the Earth on the obverse shall bear images emblematic of, and honoring, the discoveries and missions of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Mercury, Gemini, and Space Shuttle missions and other manned Earth-orbiting missions, and the Apollo missions to the Moon.

(II) **JUPITER COIN.**—The reverse of the \$1 coins issued under this Act which bear an image of the planet Jupiter on the obverse shall include a scientifically accurate depiction of the Galilean moon Europa and depict both a past and future mission to Europa.

(III) **SATURN COIN.**—The reverse of the \$1 coins issued under this Act which bear an image of the planet Saturn on the obverse shall include a scientifically accurate depiction of the moon Titan and depict both a past and a future mission to Titan.

(IV) **PLUTO (AND OTHER DWARF PLANETS) COIN.**—The reverse of the \$1 coins issued under this Act which bear an image of the planet Pluto on the obverse shall include a design that is emblematic of telescopic exploration of deep space by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the

ongoing search for Earth-like planets orbiting other stars.

(4) **REALISTIC AND SCIENTIFICALLY ACCURATE DEPICTIONS.**—The images for the designs of coins issued under this Act shall be selected on the basis of the realism and scientific accuracy of the images and on the extent to which the images are reminiscent of the dramatic and beautiful artwork on coins of the so-called “Golden Age of Coinage” in the United States, at the beginning of the Twentieth Century, with the participation of such noted sculptors and medallic artists as James Earle Fraser, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Victor David Brenner, Adolph A. Weinman, Charles E. Barber, and George T. Morgan.

(b) **SELECTION.**—The design for the coins minted under this Act shall be—

(1) selected by the Secretary, after consultation with the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Commission of Fine Arts; and

(2) reviewed by the Citizens Coin Advisory Committee.

SEC. 5. ISSUANCE OF COINS.

(a) **QUALITY OF COINS.**—Coins minted under this Act shall be issued in proof quality only.

(b) **MINT FACILITY.**—Only 1 facility of the United States Mint may be used to strike any particular combination of denomination and quality of the coins minted under this Act.

(c) **PERIOD FOR ISSUANCE.**—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, including section 7(d), the Secretary—

(1) may accept orders for the coins authorized under this Act during the period beginning on January 1, 2008 and ending on December 31, 2008; and

(2) may mint and issue such coins required to fulfill such orders during the period beginning on January 1, 2008 and ending on December 31, 2009.

(d) **EXCEPTION TO PROGRAM LIMITATION.**—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the minting or issuance of coins under this Act in 2009 shall not—

(1) preclude the Secretary from including a surcharge on the issuance of any other commemorative coin minted or issued in 2009; and

(2) be counted against the annual 2 commemorative coin program minting and issuance limitation under section 5112(m)(1) of title 31, United States Code.

(e) **ISSUANCE OF GOLD COINS.**—Each gold coin minted under this Act may be issued only as part of a complete set with 1 of each of the 9 \$1 coins minted under this Act.

SEC. 6. SALE OF COINS.

(a) **SALE PRICE.**—The coins issued under this Act shall be sold by the Secretary at a price equal to the sum of—

(1) the face value of the coins;

(2) the surcharge provided in section 7(a) with respect to such coins; and

(3) the cost of designing and issuing the coins (including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, overhead expenses, marketing, and shipping).

(b) **PREPAID ORDERS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall accept prepaid orders for the coins minted under this Act before the issuance of such coins.

(2) **DISCOUNT.**—Sale prices with respect to prepaid orders under paragraph (1) shall be at a reasonable discount.

(c) **PRESENTATION.**—In addition to the issuance of coins under this Act in such other methods of presentation as the Secretary determines to be appropriate, the Secretary shall provide, as a sale option, a presentation case which displays the \$50 gold coin in the center, surrounded by the \$1 silver coins in elliptical orbits. All such presen-

tation cases shall bear a plaque with appropriate inscriptions that include the names and dates of the spacecraft missions on which United States astronauts lost their lives over the course of the space program and the names of such astronauts.

SEC. 7. SURCHARGES.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—All sales of coins minted under this Act shall include a surcharge as follows:

(1) A surcharge of \$50 per coin for the \$50 coin.

(2) A surcharge of \$10 per coin for the \$1 coin.

(3) A surcharge of \$1 per coin for any bronze duplicate minted under section 8.

(b) **DISTRIBUTION.**—Subject to section 5134(f) of title 31, United States Code, all surcharges received by the Secretary from the sale of coins issued under this Act shall be promptly distributed as follows:

(1) The first \$4,000,000 available for distribution under this section, to the NASA Family Assistance Fund, for the purpose of providing need-based financial assistance to the families of NASA personnel who lose their lives as a result of injuries suffered in the performance of their official duties.

(2) Of amounts available for distribution after the payment under paragraph (1), $\frac{1}{2}$ of the next \$1,000,000 to each of the following:

(A) The Dr. Ronald E. McNair Educational (D.R.E.M.E.) Science Literacy Foundation for the purposes of improving and strengthening the process of teaching and learning science, math, and technology at all educational levels, elementary through college through the promotion of innovative educational programs.

(B) The Challenger Center for Space Science Education, for the purposes of creating positive learning experiences using space science as a theme that raise student expectations of success, fostering a long-term interest in mathematics, science, and technology, and motivating students to pursue careers in these fields.

(3) The remainder of the amounts available for distribution after the payments under paragraphs (1) and (2), to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution for the preservation, maintenance, and display of space artifacts at the National Air and Space Museum (including the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center).

(c) **AUDITS.**—The NASA Family Assistance Fund, the Dr. Ronald E. McNair Educational Science Literacy Foundation, the Challenger Center for Space Science Education, and the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution shall be subject to the audit requirements of section 5134(f)(2) of title 31, United States Code, with regard to the amounts received under subsection (b).

(d) **LIMITATION.**—Notwithstanding subsection (a), no surcharge may be included with respect to the issuance under this Act of any coin during a calendar year if, as of the time of such issuance, the issuance of such coin would result in the number of commemorative coin programs issued during such year to exceed the annual 2 commemorative coin program issuance limitation under section 5112(m)(1) of title 31, United States Code (as in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act). The Secretary may issue guidance to carry out this subsection.

SEC. 8. BRONZE DUPLICATES.

The Secretary may strike and sell bronze duplicates of the \$50 gold coins authorized under this Act, at a price determined by the Secretary to be appropriate. Such duplicates shall not be considered to be United States coins and shall not be legal tender.

The **SPEAKER** pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on this legislation and to insert extraneous materials thereon.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the House leadership for allowing this most important piece of legislation to proceed expeditiously. I also thank Chairman BARNEY FRANK, the chairman of the full committee, the Committee on Financial Services, which has jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 6455, the NASA 50th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act, which would require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of NASA.

I would like to thank my colleague, SHEILA JACKSON-LEE from Houston, Texas, for sponsoring this most important piece of legislation.

On October 1, 1958, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, NASA, began operations with about 8,000 employees and an annual budget of about \$100 million. Today, NASA continues its mission to pioneer the future in space exploration, in scientific technology, in aeronautics, as well as to inspire Americans of all ages and backgrounds to experience firsthand the scientific wonders of our universe.

For 50 years, NASA has been the world leader in space exploration. On December 6, 1958, the United States launched Pioneer 3, the first United States satellite to ascend to an altitude of 63,580 miles. In July 1969, NASA astronauts were the first humans to walk on the Moon. And in 1983, NASA also sent the first woman and the first African American into space. The astronauts were Sally Ride and Guy S. Bluford.

It is through NASA technology and research that our world is a much safer and well-informed place. We are blessed to have NASA as a part of the American history and a part of our great American icons.

In 1990, the Hubble Space Telescope was launched, providing helpful insight into the history and fate of our universe. And in December of 1999, Terra, the flagship of NASA's Earth-Observing System, was launched to monitor climate and environmental changes on Earth.

Telecommunications would not be what they are but for NASA. Something as simple as the microwave is a

development that has come into being as a result of NASA.

It is with great pride and sincere appreciation that we commemorate NASA's 50th anniversary with a gold and silver coin that honors NASA's remarkable achievements, enlightening research, and dedicated employees.

And on the note of the employees, let me just say that NASA employees are second-to-none. They are hardworking employees who have devoted much of their lives to the research that has made our lives much better, and we, by doing this, will pay them a great deal of respect and give an expression of gratitude.

Many of NASA's employees, however, have lost their lives during space missions, including the crews of *Apollo 6*, and the Space Shuttle *Challenger*, and the Space Shuttle *Columbia*. These Americans are owed a debt of gratitude, as well as their families, and today, we want to thank them, their families, for the lives that were lost and the tribute that we will pay to them for the price that they paid to help us to explore the universe.

This is not the first time that this Congress has voted to create a NASA 50th anniversary commemorative coin program. On July 30 of last year, the House passed H.R. 2750, a bill with 296 cosponsors that would require the creation of such a program. I was proud to be a cosponsor. The final vote of passage on the bill was 402-0.

Recently, the Senate passed an amended Senate version of H.R. 2750 on June 19 of this year.

As a result of the constitutional requirement that revenue-raising bills originate in the House, it was necessary to reintroduce the Senate bill as a new House bill. This bill, H.R. 6455, adopts the language of the Senate-amended bill.

Again, I thank my colleague SHEILA JACKSON-LEE for introducing this bill. I urge my colleagues to support it.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, DC, July 11, 2008.

Hon. BARNEY FRANK,
Chairman, Financial Services Committee,
Washington, DC.

DEAR BARNEY: I am writing regarding H.R. 6455, the "NASA 50th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act."

As you know, the Committee on Ways and Means maintains jurisdiction over bills that raise revenue. H.R. 6455 contains a provision that establishes a surcharge for the sale of commemorative coins that are minted under the bill, and thus falls within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means.

However, as part of our ongoing understanding regarding commemorative coin bills and in order to expedite this bill for Floor consideration, the Committee will forgo action. This is being done with the understanding that it does not in any way prejudice the Committee with respect to the appointment of Conferees or its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future.

I would appreciate your response to this letter, confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 6455, and would ask that a

copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the record.

Sincerely,

CHARLES B. RANGEL,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES,
Washington, DC, July 14, 2008.

Hon. CHARLES B. RANGEL,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means, U.S.
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHARLIE: I am writing in response to your letter regarding H.R. 6455, the "NASA 50th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act," which was introduced in the House and referred to the Committee on Financial Services on July 11, 2008. It is my understanding that this bill be scheduled for floor consideration shortly.

I wish to confirm our mutual understanding on this bill. As you know, section 7 of the bill establishes a surcharge for the sale of commemorative coins that are minted under the bill. I acknowledge your committee's jurisdictional interest in such surcharges as revenue matters. However, I appreciate your willingness to forego committee action on H.R. 6455 in order to allow the bill to come to the floor expeditiously. I agree that your decision to forego further action on this bill will not prejudice the Committee on Ways and Means with respect to its jurisdictional prerogatives on this or similar legislation. I would support your request for conferees on those provisions within your jurisdiction should this bill be the subject of a House-Senate conference.

I will include this exchange of letters in the Congressional Record when this bill is considered by the House. Thank you again for your assistance.

BARNEY FRANK,
Chairman.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6455, the NASA 50th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act. I want to thank the chairman of the Financial Services Committee, Mr. FRANK, for his willingness to bring this bill to the floor.

This is an easy bill to understand. What is a little difficult to fathom is why this bill has been so star-crossed, pun intended. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. CULBERSON) proposed this idea first several Congresses ago, and the House has passed it several times in substantially the same form, this year with the help of the gentlelady from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

For reasons that aren't clear, it has always had a harder time escaping the gravitational pull of the other body; although, it's always had support. This year, the Senate acted but sent back a Senate-numbered bill with some minor amendments, and since the bill contains a revenue provision and thus has to be a House-numbered bill to go to the President, we are sending the Senate-amended language to them in this bill.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CULBERSON) speaks eloquently about the importance of the space program to the American economy, to United States national security, and to the advancement of science, and I'm honored to yield to my

friend from Texas at this time for such time as he may consume.

(Mr. CULBERSON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues. Our pride and support for NASA is, indeed, bipartisan. Without regard to where we come from in this Nation or our party origins, we share that great pride in the accomplishments of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. They've touched our lives in so many ways. I have always admired NASA, particularly as an amateur astronomer, as a native Houstonian.

Mr. PRICE is right. I have passed this bill the last two Congresses, and for whatever reason, it has had problem escaping the gravitational pull of the Senate. And with the help of my good friend, AL GREEN, and Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON-LEE we passed it again this year.

This is going to be a remarkable and beautiful coin set that will contain a \$50 high relief gold coin commemorating the lives lost in space. Those astronauts who gave their lives will be honored and recognized in that \$50 high relief gold coin, with on the front coin a scientifically accurate image of the Sun and the reverse, a design commemorating those astronauts' sacrifice.

The other coins will represent each one of the planets in the solar system, with the front of the coin with a scientifically accurate image of that planet and then the reverse of the coin with a design honoring the NASA flight center that was responsible for missions to that planet.

And then, of course, now that Pluto has been called a dwarf planet, the Pluto coin will have a reverse that honors the Hubble telescope and the Goddard Space Flight Center and the remarkable achievements of the Hubble telescope.

The proceeds of this coin will go to fund the NASA Families Assistance Fund. Those families who have lost a loved one in the space program will benefit directly from the sale of these coins.

The Ronald McNair Education Science Literary Foundation will benefit from the sale of these coins. The Challenger Center for Space Science Education to increase interest in math, science and technology will benefit from the sale of this coin. And then finally, the Smithsonian Institute, National Air and Space Museum, will benefit from the sale of this coin.

And because of the difficulties with the gravitational pull of the Senate, as my friend Mr. PRICE so eloquently points out, because this authorization bill is coming out a little late this year, the changes the Senate made are good ones, and that is to allow the Mint to sell the coins this year through December 31 of 2008, but to continue to mint them through next year so that people will have a chance to order

them and the Mint will have plenty of time to complete the designs and to market them.

It is going to be a beautiful set that the Mint estimates will raise a great deal of money for the benefit of the families, the benefit of these educational funds, and for the benefit of the National Air and Space Museum.

I'm very grateful to my colleagues from Texas, Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON-LEE, my good friend AL GREEN, and my good friend Congressman TOM PRICE of the Georgia delegation, next to Texas my favorite delegation in the United States Congress.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. I yield myself 1 minute.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank Mr. PRICE. He and I worked together on the Financial Services Committee. I thank him for his dedication and devotion.

I'd like to thank my colleague and friend from Houston, Texas (Mr. CULBERSON) for his outstanding service on this bill as well. This is truly a bipartisan piece of legislation.

At this time, I'm honored to yield to the sponsor of the legislation, Ms. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE, as much time as she may consume.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Let me thank my colleague Mr. GREEN for his outstanding leadership on the Financial Services Committee in the management of this bill.

Let me also thank his co-manager on the floor as well, and I'd like to thank the chairman of the Financial Services Committee and his ranking member. Chairman FRANK has been a champion of this legislation. His staff and the Financial Services Committee has been a supporter as we have made our way from the House, through the committee process, through the Senate, back to the House, and now back to the Senate.

I think it's important to note that the House has the ability to legislate on revenue matters, and it is important as we pass this legislation for it to pass quickly in the Senate in order for this very worthy acknowledgment of the NASA 50th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act.

I'm delighted to be the original cosponsor and author of this legislation, joined with my colleague Congressman JOHN CULBERSON. I want to congratulate him and congratulate his staff. He has worked over a number of sessions, and we have collaborated on an institution that we've seen grow and thrive and improve over the years.

This particular legislation is a commemoration of the 50 years of NASA. The year 2008 will mark the 50th anniversary of the creation of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, NASA. This important legislation celebrates NASA's 50th birthday with a commemorative coin. The legislation also honors extraordinary partnerships between NASA and its 10 space and research centers.

As a long-standing member of the Science Committee, I had the opportunity to visit most of NASA's space and research centers, and I hope as we stand on the floor today, each and every one of them, wherever they are located, will view this as a special tribute to them.

□ 1045

This reflects the distinguished history of NASA. The United States of America won the race to land a man on the moon and subsequently had the opportunity to have women in space. And thanks to the courage, dedication and brilliance of NASA, America has continued to lead the world in the exploration of the solar system and the universe.

On October 1, 1958, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration began operation. At the time, it consisted of only about 8,000 employees and an annual budget of \$100 million. Over the next 50 years, NASA had been involved in many defining events which helped to shape human history. We consider the astronauts our heroes. And I've always enjoyed saying that at my annual Christmas party with 3,000 youngsters, the astronauts are more popular than Santa Claus.

Many of us remember how inspired we were when on May 25, 1961, President John F. Kennedy proclaimed, "I believe this Nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to Earth." We all know the phenomenon of "The Right Stuff," the courageous men who first went into space. "No single space project in this period will be more impressive to mankind, or more important for the long-range exploration of space; and none will be so difficult or expensive to accomplish" as President Kennedy said as he referred to landing a person on the moon.

Always at the forefront of technological innovation, NASA has been home to countless "firsts" in the field of space exploration, from the 1958 launch of Pioneer 3, the first U.S. satellite to ascend to an altitude of 63,000 miles, to the January 1998 signing of the International Space Station agreement between 15 countries, establishing the framework for cooperation among partners on the design, development, operation and utilization of the Space Station.

Over the past 50 years, NASA's accomplishments have included many. I think it is important, Mr. Speaker, to note that many who have gone to the Space Station—and I'm putting in my reservation—have indicated that it is massive, it is enormous, it is powerful, it is impressive, it is as large as a football field. That is the genius of America. And this is the genius that we celebrate by this commemorative coin.

I note, very briefly, on February 20, 1962, John Glenn became the first American to circle the Earth.

Briefly, on April 6, 1965, the United States launched Intelsat I, the first commercial satellite.

On November 13, 1961, the United States launched Mariner 9, the first mission to orbit another planet, that was Mars.

On April 12, 1981, NASA launched the Space Shuttle *Columbia*.

On January 18–24, 1983, NASA launched Space Shuttle *Challenger*!

On July 22, 1999, Space Shuttle *Columbia*'s flight was led by Air Force Colonel Eileen Collins, the first woman to command a shuttle mission.

On July 20, 1969, *Apollo 11* astronauts Neil A. Armstrong and Edwin E. Aldrin made the first lunar landing mission while Michael Collins orbited overhead in the Apollo command module.

On April 24, 1990, the Hubble Space Telescope was launched into space.

So many firsts, but yet, of course, there were tragedies. And today, as we commemorate this coin or pass this legislation, we also acknowledge the fallen heroes in *Columbia* and *Challenger*, and the others who have found their dream of going into space shortened by this tragic incident.

It is not safe, it is not easy, it is risky, but there are men and women, Americans, who are willing to go into space to be able to push the envelope to ensure that humanity has the kind of health resources or health research in HIV/AIDS and stroke and heart attacks to be able to move this Nation and humanity around the world to its highest level.

I'm very pleased that we, in the Houston area, celebrate the Johnson Space Center, representing so many space centers around the world. I am even more pleased to have the opportunity, on more than one occasion, to welcome home the astronauts as they've landed at the Johnson Space Center. What a remarkable experience to hear their stories, to see their eyes light up as they express what it's like to be in space, to take a space walk. As our most recent mission evidenced, how important it is that space has reflected the diversity of America—Asians, Hispanics, African Americans, Caucasians, men, women, people from all over this Nation, and yes, our international partners from Japan, from Russia, from many places around the world.

And what will this coin do? And we encourage, if I might, for everyone to be excited about this coin. I'm hoping that you will commemorate the passage of this legislation by securing to you the value of the NASA coins. You can say this on the floor of the House, we're not marketing, but we think it will be an outstanding and special historical artifact that you will really want to have. But it also serves to further the dream, the dream of space, the dream in the hearts and minds of young people.

In this very important legislation the proceeds of the sale will benefit the life and legacy of Dr. Ronald E. McNair, a friend, a neighbor, a member of the Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church; the late Dr. Ronald E. McNair whose Edu-

cational Science Literacy Foundation is strengthening the connection of minority youngsters to math and science. It will also help the Challenger Center for Space Science Education, for the purposes of creating positive learning experiences using space science as a theme that raise student expectations of success.

All of this will be, as well, celebrated by adding dollars to the NASA Families Assistance Fund, and that is, of course, the fund that provides for those who have lost their loved ones in the course of this historic opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, let me acknowledge Jonathan Obee of the Financial Services Committee on this legislation. I also wish to pay tribute to Yohannes Tsehai of my staff, as I've indicated, again, to the chairman of the full committee, Mr. FRANK, and of the subcommittees, and the ranking member of the full committee. I also want to acknowledge, as I indicated before, the manager of the bill from Houston and the manager from the minority who is managing this bill.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, let me say this, that coins may represent some symbolism, but in the spirit of what NASA has meant to America, it is more than that. It is simply to say thank you; thank you to the brave men and women who are willing, yes, to sacrifice their life so that humanity can be lifted to a higher level.

Learning what happens in space can improve the quality of lives of all Americans. And I hope this coin will remind young people today of the importance of math and science and pushing their own envelopes. I want to see more astronauts and more astronauts, more exploration, if you will, and the understanding of science to improve the quality of life of all of America and around the world.

With that, I ask my colleagues to support this legislation and I thank Mr. GREEN for his time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 6455, the NASA 50th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act. I was pleased to introduce this bill and I thank my colleague, Mr. CULBERSON, who joined me in introducing this legislation, and Chairman FRANK of the Financial Services Committee, for his excellent leadership in shepherding this historic legislation to passage on the House floor.

The year 2008 will mark the 50th anniversary of the creation of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). This important legislation celebrates NASA's 50th birthday with a commemorative coin. The legislation also honors the extraordinary partnerships between NASA and its 10 space and research centers.

Mr. Speaker, NASA has a distinguished history. The United States of America won the race to land a man on the moon and, thanks to the courage, dedication, and brilliance of NASA, America has continued to lead the world in the exploration of the solar system and the universe.

On October 1, 1958, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration began operation. At the time it consisted of only about

8,000 employees and an annual budget of \$100 million. Over the next 50 years, NASA has been involved in many defining events occurred which have shaped the course of human history and demonstrated to the world the character of the people of the United States.

Many of us remember how inspired we were when on May 25, 1961, President John F. Kennedy proclaimed: "I believe this Nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to earth. No single space project in this period will be more impressive to mankind, or more important for the long-range exploration of space; and none will be so difficult or expensive to accomplish."

Always at the forefront of technological innovation, NASA has been home to countless "firsts" in the field of space exploration, from the 1958 launch of Pioneer 3, the first U.S. satellite to ascend to an altitude of 63,580 miles, to the January 1998 signing of the International Space Station agreement between 15 countries, establishing the framework for cooperation among partners on the design, development, operation, and utilization of the Space Station. Over the past 50 years, NASA's accomplishments have included:

On 20 Feb. 1962, John Glenn became the first American to circle the Earth, making three orbits in his *Friendship 7* Mercury spacecraft.

On 6 Apr. 1965, the United States launched Intelsat I, the first commercial satellite (communications), into geostationary orbit.

On 13 Nov. 1971, the United States launched Mariner 9, the first mission to orbit another planet (Mars).

On 12 Apr. 1981, NASA launched the Space Shuttle *Columbia* on the first flight of the Space Transportation System (STS-1).

On 18–24 Jun. 1983, NASA launched Space Shuttle *Challenger* (STS-7) carrying three mission specialists, including Sally K. Ride, the first woman astronaut. In another historic mission, two months later, NASA launched STS-8 carrying the first black American astronaut, Guion S. Bluford.

On 22 Jul. 1999, the Space Shuttle *Columbia*'s 26th flight was led by Air Force Col. Eileen Collins, the first woman to command a Shuttle mission.

On July 20, 1969, *Apollo 11* astronauts Neil A. Armstrong and Edwin E. Aldrin made the first lunar landing mission while Michael Collins orbited overhead in the *Apollo* command module. Armstrong set foot on the surface, telling the millions of listeners that it was "one small step for man—one giant leap for mankind." Aldrin soon followed him out and planted an American flag but omitted claiming the land for the U.S. as had routinely been done during European exploration of the Americas. The two Moon-walkers left behind an American flag and a plaque bearing the inscription: "Here Men from Planet Earth First Set Foot upon the Moon. Jul. 1969 A.D. We came in Peace for All Mankind."

On April 24, 1990, the Hubble Space Telescope was launched into space aboard the STS-31 mission of the Space Shuttle *Discovery*. The Hubble has revolutionized astronomy while expanding our knowledge of the universe and inspiring millions of scientists, students, and members of the public with its unprecedented deep and clear images of space."

Mr. Speaker, in addition to these historic events, NASA has greatly contributed to our understanding of our universe. In 1968, *Apollo 8* took off atop a Saturn V booster from the Kennedy Space Center for a historic mission to orbit the Moon. As *Apollo 8* traveled outward, the crew focused a portable television camera on Earth and for the first time humanity saw its home from afar, a tiny, lovely, and fragile "blue marble" hanging in the blackness of space.

This transmission and viewing of Earth from a distance was an enormously significant accomplishment and united the Nation at a time when American society was in crisis over Vietnam, race relations, urban problems, and a host of other difficulties.

The success of the United States space exploration program in the 20th Century bodes well for its continued leadership in the 21st Century. This success is largely attributable to the remarkable and indispensable partnership between the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and its 10 space and research centers. One of these important research centers is located in my home city of Houston. The Johnson Space Center, which manages the development, testing, production, and delivery of all United States human spacecraft and all human spacecraft-related functions, is one of the crown jewels of NASA and a lodestar in the Houston area. The other nine research and space centers are:

1. The Ames Research Center in California's Silicon Valley provides products, technologies, and services that enable NASA missions and expand human knowledge in areas as diverse as small spacecraft and supercomputers, science missions and payloads, thermal protection systems and information technology.

2. The Dryden Flight Research Center, the leading center for innovative flight research.

3. The Glenn Research Center, which develops power, propulsion, and communication technologies for space flight systems and aeronautics research.

4. The Goddard Space Flight Center, which specializes in research to expand knowledge on the Earth and its environment, the solar system, and the universe through observations from space.

5. The Jet Propulsion Laboratory, the leading center for robotic exploration of the Solar System.

6. The Kennedy Space Center, the gateway to the Universe and world leader in preparing and launching missions around the Earth and beyond.

7. The Langley Research Center, which continues to forge new frontiers in aviation and space research for aerospace, atmospheric sciences, and technology commercialization to improve the way the world lives.

8. The Marshall Space Flight Center, a world leader in developing space transportation and propulsion systems, engineers the future to accelerate exploration and scientific discovery.

9. The Stennis Space Center, which is responsible for rocket propulsion testing and for partnering with industry to develop and implement remote sensing technology.

NASA's stunning achievements over the last 50 years have been won for all mankind at great cost and sacrifice. In the quest to explore the universe, many NASA employees have lost their lives, including the crews of

Apollo 6, the Space Shuttle *Challenger*, and the Space Shuttle *Columbia*.

The surcharge proceeds from the sale of a coin commemorating the contributions of NASA will generate valuable funding for the NASA Families Assistance Fund for the purposes of need-based financial assistance to the families of NASA personnel who die as a result of injuries suffered in the performance of their official duties. And equally important, proceeds from the sale of commemorative coins will also benefit the Dr. Ronald E. McNair Educational (D.R.E.M.E.) Science Literacy Foundation, which is dedicated to improving and strengthening the process of teaching and learning science, math, and technology at all educational levels, elementary through college through the promotion of innovative educational programs.

This legislation also benefits the Challenger Center for Space Science Education, for the purposes of creating positive learning experiences using space science as a theme that raise student expectations of success, fostering a long-term interest in mathematics, science, and technology, and motivating students to pursue careers in these fields. The remainders of the proceeds, after distribution to the NASA Families Assistance Fund, the DREME Foundation, and the Challenger Center for Space Science Education, are slated to go to the Smithsonian Institution for the preservation, maintenance, and display of space artifacts at the National Air and Space Museum (including the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center).

Mr. Speaker, in the centuries to come, when space travel will be commonplace and America will have successfully led the way for humanity to utilize the resources of other planets, these first 50 years of NASA's existence will be remembered as the most significant era of human space exploration. It is, therefore, important that we commemorate the great achievements of NASA's first 50 years.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, let me also thank Jonathan Obee of the Financial Services Committee on this legislation. I also wish to pay special tribute to Yohannes Tsehai of my staff. Without their valuable contributions this significant legislative achievement would not have been possible. I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this historic legislation.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I want to say how pleased we are that this bill has come to the floor. I want to commend my friend from Texas for shepherding this through previous Congresses. I want to commend the gentlelady from Texas for painting a picture of the wonder of NASA that we all know and love. The byproducts of the NASA program have been remarkable.

I remember myself that day in July of 1969 when we landed on the Moon, and watching that, and what a special source of pride that was for all Americans. I remember thinking—actually, every time that NASA has a flight—the incredible energy that it takes to boost those rockets into space.

This bill is going to get something that's very special on the floor of this House, and that's a vote; that's a vote, Mr. Speaker. We would appeal to the Democrat majority leadership to allow

a vote on other bills, other bills that have items of import, like the energy that it takes for every single American to live each and every day. Just a vote, that's all we ask for, just a vote.

We had many of our friends come to the floor earlier today and talk about the issue of energy. And we, on our side of the aisle, believe that a comprehensive solution is absolutely necessary.

We've got to have conservation, and Americans are doing their share on that score as we speak. We've got to have an alternative fuel source. And I'm one of those that's hopeful that it's not a source of energy that is selected by this Congress but that utilizes the ingenuity and the entrepreneurship and the genius of the American people to come up with that alternative fuel.

But we know that we also need a short-term, a near-term solution, and that's the increase in supply. And that's what we ask for for the floor of this House is to allow a vote on an increase in supply for onshore fossil fuels, for offshore deep sea exploration, for clean coal technology, for oil shale, for increasing refining capacity so that the energy that was put into the space program can be harnessed for the energy that will solve the challenges that we have for our Nation in terms of American-made energy for Americans.

So that's what we ask for, Mr. Speaker, a vote, a vote not just on this bill—which we know we'll get, and we're very grateful for that—but a vote on the bills of significant import to the American people in this day and in this time so that we can make certain that we do, in fact, increase American-made energy for Americans.

Mr. CULBERSON. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I'm pleased to yield to my friend from Texas.

Mr. CULBERSON. I thank the gentleman for yielding because I wanted to point out to the House some of the remarkable research that NASA is doing. In fact, at Rice University in Houston, Texas that my friend AL GREEN and I and Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON-LEE are proud to represent Rice University, they're developing a quantum wire, with the help of NASA, using carbon nanotubes that transmit electricity ballistically with zero resistance, essentially room temperature superconductors that will allow the storage and transmission of electricity in ways we cannot even imagine today, carrying electricity in a wire the width of your little finger 10 to 20 times the electricity carried in those giant overhead power lines from Los Angeles to New York with no loss of electricity.

NASA research at Rice University with the quantum wire and carbon nanotubes will increase the efficiency of solar cells so dramatically that, for example, when you put carbon nanotubes into a solar cell, you increase the efficiency to 60 and 70 percent.

So commemorating NASA today, we're commemorating the great technological advances that NASA has

brought to all of us as Americans today. My wife often teases me about all these electronic devices I carry to communicate with my district on Quick.com and Twiter.com—and let me see, I've got one in this pocket right here.

We all benefit from the technological research that NASA does, but the future holds greater promise for us, with the carbon nanotube work and combining that with solar cell technology, truly holds the promise of making America energy independent in the years to come.

But in the meantime, my friend from Georgia is exactly right, we need to drill here, drill now, and we will certainly pay less. And the Congress is all that's standing in the way of drilling here and drilling now. And I hope they will give us a vote on that.

But in the meantime, today we can honor the great technological achievements of NASA and the carbon nanotube research that holds the promise for making America energy independent in the long term.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. I thank my friend for his comments.

And I appreciate just a glimpse into the wonderful genius of the American people and what we're able to do when we harness the energy of the American mind and have it move in a focused direction, like increasing the supply of energy.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to support this bill and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining on each side.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 5½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Georgia has 5½ minutes remaining.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentlelady from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I thank the distinguished gentleman from Texas as well.

I'm very pleased to add to the debate on the floor of the House and how far-reaching NASA has come as it relates to all academic institutions. I'm very proud of the partnership that NASA has had with Texas Southern University, one historically black college located in the 18th Congressional District, as well as Oakwood College located in Huntsville, Alabama. But there are many, many colleges that NASA has collaborated with. It's been a particularly important partnership with historically black colleges and Hispanic-serving colleges. As it relates to Texas Southern University, they've worked on aeronautics. They have, in fact, engaged in fellowships with young people to be able to expose them to the importance of the work that NASA has done.

I think even more so, it is important for the American people to know that the payload that the astronauts have taken to the Space Station and actu-

ally worked on includes the work of elementary, middle school and high school students. What better way for there to be an excitement about space and what we enjoy but doing it in that way.

I'm delighted that my colleagues have joined in discussing the broadness of our energy policy. I think in the passing of Dr. DeBakey we should make note of the great medical research that goes on with NASA. And as I've indicated with HIV/AIDS, with heart attacks or heart disease or stroke, it is not known to most Americans how much medical research is done on the Space Station and how many different countries are there and the medical doctors that go into space as well.

I know that we will work for a unified energy policy that involves, if you will, all of the elements, including conservation and wind and solar—Texas being the largest State with wind power. And I look forward to us having a fossil fuel, wind, solar, conservation, and we will do that as we move together.

NASA is so much a part of this extended research on climate change. And these commemorative coins will celebrate the diversity of NASA, how valuable it is for us. I hope my colleagues will enthusiastically support this particular legislation that will cause us to make sure that we are reminded of the great work of this great organization, serving all of the people of the United States of America.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank my good friends from Texas once again for bringing this bill to the floor and thank the chairman of the committee for bringing this bill to the floor.

In closing, I will just say that my constituents and many constituents and many Americans that I hear from all across this Nation say they remember fondly the wonderful enthusiasm with which this Nation gathered around, challenged by a President in the early 1960s to go to the Moon. And NASA was absolutely pivotal and instrumental in that. And it's that kind of enthusiasm that my constituents and so many Americans believe we ought to be putting into the same kind of program to discovering that alternative fuel that will lead us and allow us to lead throughout the 21st century.

□ 1100

So this bill will get a vote. And for that we are very, very grateful.

We would ask, Mr. Speaker, and appeal to the leadership to allow a vote on increasing the supply of American energy for Americans and providing a program that allows for the expansive development of alternative fuel.

With that, I am pleased to support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in commemorating NASA's 50 years, the 50th anniversary, if you will, we are talking about great accomplishments. We are talking about the past. We are talking about the destinations that NASA has taken us to. We have gone to the Moon; that's a destination. We have a space station; that's a destination. We plan to go to Mars; that's a destination. But our destiny is beyond the Milky Way. Our destiny is beyond Alpha Centauri. Our destiny is beyond the stars. NASA is in its infancy, and it will take us to our destiny.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6455.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

TIMOTHY J. RUSSERT HIGHWAY

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 3145) to designate a portion of United States Route 20A, located in Orchard Park, New York, as the "Timothy J. Russert Highway".

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The text of the Senate bill is as follows:

S. 3145

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Timothy "Tim" John Russert was born on May 7, 1950 in Buffalo, New York, to Elizabeth and Timothy Joseph Russert.

(2) Tim Russert graduated from Canisius High School in Buffalo, New York, earned his bachelor's degree in political science from John Carroll University in 1972, and his Juris Doctor from Cleveland State University—Marshall School of Law in 1976.

(3) Tim Russert embarked on a career in public service with United States Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan and the Governor of New York, Mario Cuomo, from 1977 to 1984.

(4) After his career in public service and New York politics, Tim Russert began his career in journalism when he joined NBC in 1984.

(5) In 1991, Tim Russert became the host of the Sunday morning news program Meet the Press, the longest-running program in the history of television. He would go on to become the longest serving host of the show.

(6) Throughout his career, Tim Russert received 48 honorary doctorates and several awards for excellence in journalism, including—

(A) the Edward R. Murrow Award from the Radio-Television News Directors Association;

(B) the John Peter Zenger Freedom of the Press Award;

(C) the American Legion Journalism Award;

(D) the Veterans of Foreign Wars News Media Award;